

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

REMARKS

This Reply and Amendment is intended to be completely responsive to the final Office Action dated April 9, 2003, the Advisory Action dated May 20, 2003, the Advisory Action dated June 23, 2003, and the Advisory Action dated August 26, 2003.

Status of Claims

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the Detailed Office Action dated April 9, 2003, the Advisory Action dated May 20, 2003, the Advisory Action dated June 23, 2003 and the Advisory Action dated August 26, 2003. The Applicants acknowledge that the Reply and Amendment filed by the Applicants on April 23, 2003, the Reply and Amendment filed by the Applicants on May 30, 2003 and the Reply and Amendment filed by the Applicants on July 18, 2003 were not entered.

Claims 21-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32, 34-37, 39 and 67-102 are pending in this Application.

Claims 24, 25, 27, 30, 33, 38 and 40 have previously been cancelled (without prejudice). Claims 41-66 are withdrawn from consideration. The final Office Action and the Advisory Action dated August 26, 2003 indicate that Claims 21, 67 and 84-102 stand rejected and that Claims 22-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32, 34-37, 39 and 68-83 are objected to. The final Office Action indicated that Claims 22-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32, 34-37, 39 and 68-83 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Upon entry of this Reply and Amendment, independent Claims 21, 67, and 86 and dependent Claims 22-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32, 34-37, 68-85, 87-102 will be amended for clarity.

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

Interview Summary – September 3, 2003

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the telephonic interview conducted on September 3, 2003. The Interview was attended by Examiner Salvatore and attorney John Lazarus for the Applicants.

During the interview, the Advisory Action dated August 26, 2003 and proposed claim amendments suggested by the Applicants were discussed and the Examiner indicated that one characteristic of the adhesive material that would overcome the rejections of independent Claims 21 and 67 would be "removable" such as following assembly of the quilt. Agreement was reached that the Applicants would prepare and submit amendments to the claims to better recite such a characteristic in order to obtain allowance of claims in the present Application, reserving the right to present claims of additional and varying scope in other related applications.

Interview Summary – September 2, 2003

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the telephonic interview conducted on September 2, 2003. The Interview was attended by Examiner Salvatore and attorney John Lazarus for the Applicants.

During the interview, the Advisory Action dated August 26, 2003 and proposed claim amendments suggested by the Applicants were discussed and the Examiner indicated that the proposed amendment to independent Claim 86 to recite a characteristic of the adhesive material as a water-soluble material would overcome the previous rejection of independent Claim 86. Agreement was reached that the Examiner would review the proposed amendments suggested by the Applicants for independent Claims 21 and 67 with the Supervisory Examiner and would contact the attorney for the Applicants.

Interview Summary – August 28, 2003

The Applicants thank the Supervisory Examiner for the telephonic interview conducted on August 28, 2003. The Interview was attended by Supervisory Examiner Morris and attorney John Lazarus for the Applicants.

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

During the interview, the Advisory Action dated August 26, 2003 was discussed and the Supervisory Examiner indicated that characteristics of an adhesive material that could be recited to overcome the pending rejection of the claims would include those characteristics that had been indicated to be allowable in dependent claims, such as water-soluble and removable. Agreement was reached that the Applicants would contact the Examiner and suggest proposed amendments for review by the Examiner.

Interview Summary – July 10, 2003

The Applicants thank the Examiner and the Supervisory Examiner for the telephonic interview conducted on July 10, 2003. The Interview was attended by Supervisory Examiner Terrell Morris, Examiner Lynda Salvatore, and attorneys Walter Zimmerman and John Lazarus for the Applicants.

During the interview the Applicants acknowledged that the clarity of the terminology used in the claims presently under examination could be improved (while preserving the claim scope). The Applicants expressed a concern that they did not want others to be able to copy the inventive concept, while avoiding claim coverage. The Supervisory Examiner suggested that the Applicants add clarity by reciting the element of the batting and the adhesive as a "composite." The Supervisory Examiner also explained how better to recite certain attributes of the adhesive for further clarification, for example, an "adhesive material effective to form a bond."

Agreement was reached that proper recitation of attributes of the adhesive material and clarifying phraseology would resolve the pending rejections of the independent claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2, and would also clarify the patentability of the recited subject matter.

The Applicants requested withdrawal of the finality of the final Office Action. However, the Supervisory Examiner stated that the finality of the final Office Action would not need to be withdrawn. The Applicants agreed to file an amendment to the claims

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

incorporating certain attributes of the adhesive material and that would use the example phraseology suggested by the Supervisory Examiner, for clarity.

The Applicants reserved the right to pursue additional/alternative claim coverage in a continuation patent application.

Summary

The Applicants have amended independent Claims 21, 67 and 86 to recite the batting and the adhesive as a "composite member" and to recite a combination of certain attributes of the batting and certain attributes of the adhesive as suggested by the Examiner. The scope of independent Claims 21, 67 and 86 (as amended) is no broader than the scope of Claims 21, 67 and 86 (respectively) as examined and referenced in the final Office Action dated April 9, 2003.

The present amendments of Claims 21, 67 and 86 also specify "how" the adhesive is provided with the batting ("an adhesive material ... applied to the batting" [Claims 21 and 86] and a "batting and an adhesive material ... applied thereto" [Claim 67]) and "where" the adhesive is provided with the batting ("an adhesive connection at the opposing faces" [Claim 21] and a "bond at the opposing faces of the batting" [Claims 67 and 86]).

Claim Objections

In Section 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to Claim 85 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as being of improper form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. The Examiner suggested "to delete the term 'essentially.'"

The Applicants have amended Claim 85 to delete the term "essentially," as suggested by the Examiner.

The Applicants believe that Claim 85 (as amended) has overcome the rejection under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) and is in condition for allowance.

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2

In Sections 6-11 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 21, 67, 84, 86 and 102 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention.

Claims 21, 67 and 86

In Section 8, regarding independent Claims 21, 67 and 86, the Examiner stated that it is unclear "how the adhesive is provided with the batting ... [s]pecifically, is the adhesive applied over the surface of the batting or within the batting?" The Examiner suggested "that the Applicant specify where and how the adhesive is provided with the batting."

Independent Claim 21 is in "Jepson" form. See 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(e). Claim 21 is directed to an improvement to a "batting of a type having opposing faces and a softness and a flexibility and configured for use in the formation of a quilt" comprising a "composite member formed of the batting and an adhesive material applied to the batting" (explaining how the adhesive is provided with the batting) so that a "cover can be attached to the batting during formation of the quilt by an adhesive connection at the opposing faces of the batting" (explaining where the adhesive material is provided with the batting). Claim 21 (as amended) recites attributes of the batting (the "batting consists of cotton or polyester or cotton-polyester") and now also recites as additional limitations attributes of the adhesive material ("an adhesive connection at the opposing faces that is removable after formation of the quilt"). The additional limitations for the attributes of the adhesive have now been included in independent Claim 21 (as amended), reflecting the agreement reached with the Examiner to set forth certain characteristics of the adhesive.

The Applicants do not intend to claim any particular manner of application of the adhesive material (i.e. Claim 21 is directed to a product and not to a method). However, the adhesive material applied to the batting must form a "composite member" so that an "adhesive connection" can be made to a cover. In other words, the "composite member"

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

has the adhesive material applied in a manner that the adhesive material is present at the opposing faces (i.e. surfaces) of the batting.

The Applicants have rewritten Independent Claim 67 to recite a "composite member formed of the batting and an adhesive material for bonding fabrics applied thereto" (explaining how the adhesive material is provided with the batting) where the "adhesive material is configured to form a bond at the opposing faces of the batting" (explaining where the adhesive material is provided with the batting). Claim 67 (as amended) recites attributes of the batting (the "batting consists of cotton or polyester or cotton-polyester") and now also recites as additional limitations attributes of the adhesive material ("the adhesive material comprises an adhesive configured to form a bond ... that ... can be removed after the cover is attached to the batting"). The additional limitations for the attributes of the adhesive have now been included in independent Claim 67 (as amended), reflecting the agreement reached with the Examiner to set forth certain characteristics of the adhesive.

The specific manner in which the "composite member" is "formed" or the "adhesive material" is "applied" is not intended to be claimed (i.e. Claim 67 is directed to a product and not to a method). However, the "composite member" (of the batting and the adhesive material) is formed so that the adhesive material facilitates a bond by application of heat to secure the cover to the batting at opposing faces.

The Applicants have rewritten independent Claim 86 to recite a "composite member formed of the batting and an adhesive material applied to the batting" (explaining how the adhesive material is provided with the batting) so that a "cover can be attached to the batting by an adhesive connection ... at the opposing faces of the batting" (explaining where the adhesive material is provided with the batting). Claim 86 (as amended) recites attributes of the batting (the "batting consists of cotton or polyester or cotton-polyester") and now also recites as additional limitations attributes of the adhesive material (the "adhesive material for bonding of fabrics comprises a water-soluble material"). The additional limitations for the attributes of the adhesive have now been

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

included in independent Claim 86 (as amended), reflecting the agreement reached with the Examiner to set forth certain characteristics of the adhesive.

The Applicants do not intend to claim any particular manner of application of the adhesive material (i.e. Claim 86 is directed to a product and not to a method). However, the adhesive material applied to the batting must form a "composite member" so that an "adhesive connection" can be made to a cover. In other words, the "composite member" has the adhesive material applied in a manner that the adhesive material is present at the opposing faces (i.e. surfaces) of the batting.

The pending claims now particularly point out and distinctly define the metes and bounds of the subject matter that the Applicants intend to protect. See M.P.E.P. § 2171 and 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2. The relationship of the batting and the adhesive in forming a "composite member" is now particularly pointed out and distinctly defined. The form of the amendment of Claims 21, 67 and 86 makes clear that the scope of Claims 21, 67 and 86 (as amended) are no broader than the scope of Claims 21 and 67 as examined and referenced in the final Office Action dated April 9, 2003. Independent Claims 21, 67 and 86 (as amended) now set forth certain characteristics of the adhesive that had been previously indicated to be allowable under dependent claims in the final Office Action, based on the agreement with the Supervisory Examiner.

Dependent Claims 22-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32 and 34-37 have been amended to provide claims of varying scope and for conformance with independent Claim 21 (as amended). Dependent Claims 68-85 have been amended to provide claims of varying scope and for conformance with independent Claim 67 (as amended). Dependent Claims 87-102 have been amended to provide claims of varying scope and for conformance with independent Claim 86 (as amended).

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

Claim 86

In Section 9, regarding independent Claim 86, the Examiner stated that "it is unclear to the Examiner the difference between 'loft' and batting"

Independent Claim 86 has been rewritten and no longer recites a "loft." Claim 86 (as amended) now recites a "batting."

Claim 84

In Section 10, regarding Claim 84, the Examiner stated that "the phrase 'such as' ... renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention." The Examiner suggested that the phrase be deleted.

The Applicants have amended dependent Claim 84 to delete the phrase "such as yarn or thread" as suggested by the Examiner.

Claim 102

In Section 11, regarding dependent Claim 102, the Examiner stated that "the term 'low-loft' is a relative term" and "is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree."

The Applicants have amended dependent Claim 102 to remove the term "low-loft." Dependent Claim 102 (as amended) now recites that the cotton or polyester or cotton-polyester of the batting is "needle punched."¹

Summary

The Applicants believe that independent Claims 21, 67 and 86 (as amended) and dependent Claims 84 and 102 (as amended) have overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2 and are in condition for allowance.

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 1

In Sections 12-13 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 86-102 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 1. The Examiner stated "the specification does not teach a batting comprising a 'loft' as presently claimed ... [t]he specification merely teaches batting can be classified according to the amount of 'loft' present."

The Applicants have rewritten independent Claim 86. Claim 86 (as amended) now recites a "batting" and does not include the term "loft." Dependent Claims 92 and 98 have also been amended for conformity to Claim 86 (as amended).

The Applicants believe that independent Claim 86 (as amended) and dependent Claims 87-102 have overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 1 and are in condition for allowance.²

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

In Sections 14-15 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 86, 89, 91-93, 95-96 and 98 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,278,954 issued to Barhite under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). The Examiner stated "the Applicants use of the term 'comprising' does not preclude Barhite from being relied upon as a reference."

Independent Claim 86 has been rewritten based on independent Claim 21 (which is not under any rejection under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103) and to reflect the agreement reached by the Applicants and the Supervisory Examiner during the telephonic interviews. Claim 86 (as amended) now recites that the "batting consists of cotton or polyester or cotton-polyester" (and not a "loft").

¹ Dependent Claim 87 has also been amended to recite that the cotton or polyester or cotton-polyester of the batting is "needle punched." Support for the amendment to dependent Claims 87 and 102 is found in the original Specification on page 5, line 18.

² Dependent Claim 102 has been amended to depend from independent Claim 21 (as amended).

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

The Applicants believe that rewritten independent Claim 86 (as amended) and dependent Claims 89, 91-93, 95-96 and 98 have overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and are in condition for allowance.

Allowable Subject Matter

In Section 16 of the Office Action the Examiner stated "Claims 21 and 67 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph." Independent Claims 21 and 67 are not under any rejection under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103. The Applicants have amended independent Claims 21 and 67 to address and overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2 based on the agreement reached between the Applicants and the Examiner(s) during the telephonic Interviews and respectfully request allowance of independent Claims 21 and 67 (as amended).

In Section 17 of the Office Action the Examiner stated "Claims 84 and 85 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph." The Applicants have amended dependent Claims 84 and 85 as suggested by the Examiner to address the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 2 and respectfully request allowance of dependent Claims 84 and 85 (as amended).

In Section 18 of the Office Action the Examiner stated "Claims 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34-37, 39 and 68-83 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." The Applicants have amended base independent Claims 21 and 67 to set forth certain attributes of the adhesive that had been indicated to be allowable by the Examiner. The Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 21 and 67 are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request allowance of dependent Claims 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34-37, 39 and 68-83.

* * *

The Applicants reserve the right to pursue additional and varying claim scope in one or more related applications.

Application Serial No. 09/900,927

The Applicants believe that the amendments to the claims reflect the agreement reached with the Examiner(s) to set forth certain characteristics of the adhesive, which would patentably distinguish the claims over the prior art. The Applicants believe that each outstanding objection and rejection to the pending claims has been overcome, and the Application is in condition for allowance.

Independent Claims 21, 67, and 86 have been amended and dependent Claims 22-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32, 34-37, 68-85 and 87-102 have been amended. Claims 21-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32, 34-37, 39 and 67-102 are pending and are each believed to be allowable. The Applicants request entry of this Amendment, and reconsideration and allowance of all pending Claims 21-23, 26, 28-29, 31-32, 34-37, 39 and 67-102.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes that an Examiner's amendment is necessary for entry of this Reply and Amendment, or would otherwise advance the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date September 5, 2003 By 

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